Breath Prayer & Lectio Divina

An invitation to pause and pray with Scripture

These are two distinct practices that can be used on their own or together. Here, a short breath prayer helps us settle before we enter Lectio Divina, a prayerful way of reading Scripture. Allow around 10 to 15 minutes, or move at your own pace.

First: Breath prayer

Find a comfortable position. You may close your eyes or leave them open. Notice your natural breathing and remember that God is with you. There is no need to change or control your breath.

Choose a short prayer. If it feels helpful, silently pray one part as you breathe in and the other as you breathe out. For example:

> **Breathing in: Jesus, You are near. Breathing out: I trust You.**

Repeat the prayer gently for a few breaths or a few minutes. You can use your own words, pause whenever you wish, or pray the words without connecting them to your breathing. If your mind wanders, simply return to your prayer.

Then: Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina means “divine reading”. It offers a way of listening and responding to God through Scripture. The movements below are a guide, not a formula. Prayer can arise at any point as you read, reflect and rest.

1. Choose and read

Choose a short passage, such as Psalm 63:1–8, in a Bible translation you can understand. Ask God to help you be attentive. Read the whole passage slowly, aloud or silently, perhaps more than once. Notice the writer, setting and meaning; let a word or phrase draw your attention without searching for a special answer.

> **God, open my heart to Your Word.**

Praying with Scripture

Continue with the words you have read, bringing your response to God.

2. Reflect

Return to the word, phrase or part of the passage that stood out. Read it again in the light of the whole passage. Sit with it and consider: What does this reveal about God? How might it connect with my life? Take your time and let questions or thoughts arise.

> **God, what might You be inviting me to notice?**

3. Respond in prayer

Let the words lead you into conversation with God. You may repeat a phrase slowly as a prayer, respond to what it says, or use your own words. Bring Him your gratitude, questions, hopes or concerns. You can speak honestly while you are reading too; you do not have to wait until this step to pray.

> **Lord, this is what these words bring to my heart...**

4. Rest

Spend a few moments quietly with God. You do not need to find an answer or produce a particular feeling. If your attention wanders, you might gently return to your chosen phrase or your breath prayer.

5. Carry it into your day

Consider whether there is one word, prayer or small response you want to remember. You may wish to write it down or return to the same passage later.

> **What would it look like to carry this with me?**

A closing prayer

Loving God, thank You for meeting me in Your Word. Help me listen, respond and trust You throughout my day. Amen.

Inspired by Christian traditions of short prayer and Lectio Divina.